Pepper, hot  
*(for cooking)* 
*Capsicum annuum*

Traditional recipes can provide good guidance on how to use particular peppers. Slightly spicy Anaheim is a traditional stuffing pepper, while Pasilla Bajio’s mild smoky flavor has become associated with mole, a Mexican chocolate sauce. Poblanos are prepared in a variety of fashions, including stuffed (chiles rellenos), topped with walnut sauce (chiles en nogada), and roasted and seasoned (rajas). Cooking with peppers that have only moderate heat allows other flavors in the dish to come through.

**Germination**  Most hot peppers will sprout in 10 days to 2 weeks. Seeds will germinate poorly or not at all in cold soil. Best germination occurs when soil temperature is between 70° and 85°F.

**Plant Spacing**  Spacing will vary by variety but in general allow 15 inches to 2 feet of space between plants, and about 3 feet between rows.

**Garden Care**  Provide steady moisture to peppers as they grow. Support plants with stakes or cages as they become laden with fruit to prevent branches from breaking off or whole plants from sprawling. Temperatures higher than 90°F can cause blossom drop, so try to provide shelter from afternoon shade during periods of extreme heat. Change the location of the pepper bed every year to prevent disease problems.

**Fertilize**  Fertilize with an all-purpose vegetable food at the time of planting, and side-dress with compost or fertilizer when the first flowers appear.

**Harvest**  Peppers can be used at the immature green stage or fully ripe, so pick them as you need them. Use pruners or garden shears when harvesting fruits to avoid damaging the plant.

**Nutrition**  A serving of hot pepper provides an ample supply of Vitamins A and C.

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**Pasilla Bajio**

- **Description**: Plants reach 2-3 feet in height. Vigorous plants grow to 3 feet. Very productive.
- **Fruit**: Slim fruits, 6-10 inches long, mature from dark green to chocolate brown.
- **Comments**: 100-250 Scoville heat units.
- **Uses**: Mole sauce
- **Harvest**: 75-85 days

**Anaheim**

- **Description**: Vigorous plants grow to 3 feet. Very productive.
- **Fruit**: 7-9 inch long, tapered peppers mature from green to red. Often picked green.
- **Comments**: 500-2,000 Scoville heat units.
- **Uses**: Chiles rellenos
- **Harvest**: 75-80 days

**Poblano**

- **Description**: Plants grow to about 2 feet tall.
- **Fruit**: Fruits are 3-6 inches long and 2-3 inches wide; ripen from dark green to dark red.
- **Comments**: 500-2,500 Scoville heat units.
- **Uses**: Roasting, stuffing
- **Harvest**: 75-85 days

**Sweet Banana**

- **Description**: Vigorous 2-ft plants produce large numbers of peppers.
- **Fruit**: 4-6 inch fruits start out yellow and change to orange and then red. Harvest at any stage.
- **Comments**: 0-500 Scoville heat units.
- **Uses**: Pickling, stuffing
- **Harvest**: 60-75 days

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**TIP** — Roasting brings out the flavor of hot peppers. Coat with vegetable oil, broil them until they begin to char, and then turn. Place the roasted peppers in a covered bowl to loosen the skins.